Clause (26A) of the Income-tax Act, 1961 was that it was misused by unscruplous businessmen for laundering their blackmoney through the residents of Ladakh.

*[Translation]*

**Irregularities in Payment of Commission Under N.S.S.**

2728. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the schemes of the national savings organisation under the Finance Ministry are operated through post offices and banks;

(b) if so, whether irregularities are being committed in the payment of commission due to lack of supervisory control over the organisation; and

(c) if so, whether the Government propose to take some concrete steps to check irregularities in the payment of commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. However, any irregularities noticed due to computational mistakes by dealing hands are rectified immediately.

(c) Does not arise.

**Export of Natural Rubber**

2729. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased of state:

(a) the quantity of natural rubber exported during 1995-96;

(b) the percentage of increase in its export during 1996-97; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to increase its production and export?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) During 1995-96, 1130 MT of natural rubber was exported.

(b) During 1996-97, export of natural rubber registered an increase of 41.40%.

(c) For increasing production of natural rubber, a number of schemes including financial and technical assistance for planting of rubber, concessional supply of plantation inputs, free supply of technical knowhow and assistance for processing etc. are being operated by the Rubber Board. According to the estimates of Rubber Board, there is no exportable surplus of natural rubber in the country. There is no restriction for the export of natural rubber. Since, however, the prices in domestic market are higher than those in the international market, large scale export of natural rubber is not feasible.

*[English]*

**Liberalisation of Textile Sector**

2730. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether ASSOCHAM has made certain recommendations in regard to liberalisation of textile sector in a phased manner and inclusion of more products in the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) liberalisation list;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government have taken any tangible steps for the balancing of products for the integration of textile trade as per the general framework of World Trade Organisation (WTO) for proper restructuring of the textile and garments market; and

(d) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (d) Government have been receiving representations from trade for liberalisation of various textile products.

The Agreement on Textile and Clothing (ATC) included in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round, envisages complete integration of the textile sector into the multilateral framework of GATT/WTO by 1.1.2005, in stages. The importing countries have been integrating their textile products as per the provisions of the ATC.

**Meeting of SAARC Committee**

2731. SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sixth meeting of the SAARC Committee of Economic Cooperation (CEC) under the Chairmanship of Indian Commerce Secretary was held in New Delhi recently; and

(b) if so, the concrete steps taken by the CEC to promote trade and economic cooperation amongst SAARC countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Sixth meeting of SAARC Committee on Economic Cooperation (CEC) was held in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of the Indian Commerce Secretary on 16-17 November, 1995. This was followed by two more meetings of the CEC in Delhi on 28-29 Oct., 96 and 21-22 April, '97.

(b) The important steps initiated by the CEC to promote trade and economic cooperation amongst SAARC countries include a proposal for setting up of an institutional mechanism for settlement of trade disputes in the SAARC region, holding the Third Round of Trade Negotiations under SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) before the close of 1997, early removal of Non-tariff barriers and quantitative restrictions on all products covered under